Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior listings, and versions, of claims in the present application.

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended) A method of altering a digital music file in order to prevent reduction of sales amount of records due to a digital music file illegally distributed through a computer communication network, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

identifying, via the computer communication network, one digital music file among a plurality of digital music files such that the identified digital music file is selected based on having a greater number of other digital music files having two or more of a same name, size and playing time as the identified digital music file than other music files related to the digital music file illegally distributed through the computer communication network;

~~a)~~ producing an advertising digital music file by performing one of either deteriorating or damaging a sound quality of the identified digital ~~an original~~ music file ~~of a cooperating record corporation~~; and

~~b)~~ distributing the advertising digital music file through the computer communication network.

2.   (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein deteriorating or damaging a sound quality of the identified digital music file comprises ~~at step a) the advertising digital music file is generated by~~ inserting a noise component including a voice of a singer or performer in the identified digital ~~original~~ music file, thereby damaging the sound quality.

3.   (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein deteriorating or damaging a sound quality of the identified digital music file comprises ~~at step a) the advertising~~

digital music file is generated by lowering a sampling rate of the digital music file to below that of the identified digital original music file, thereby deteriorating the sound quality.

4. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein deteriorating or damaging a sound quality of the identified digital music file comprises at step a) the advertising digital music file is generated by distorting the waveform of the identified digital original music, thereby damaging the sound quality.

5. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein deteriorating or damaging a sound quality of the identified digital music file comprises at step a) the advertising digital music file is generated by converting a multi-channel sound of the identified digital original music to a single-channel sound, thereby deteriorating the sound quality.

6-10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) A method of altering a digital music file comprising:
identifying, via a computer communication network, a digital music file determined to have a higher probability of being reproduced by another user than other music files related to a digital music file illegally distributed through the computer communication network;
producing an advertising digital music file by converting a multi-channel sound of the identified digital an original music file to a single-channel sound, thereby deteriorating the sound quality of the identified digital the original music file; and
distributing the advertising digital music file through the a computer communication network.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of altering a digital music file comprising:
identifying, via a computer communication network, a digital music file determined to have a higher probability of being reproduced by another user than other music files related to a digital music file illegally distributed through the computer communication network;

producing an advertising digital music file by inserting a noise component into <u>the</u> <u>identified digital</u> an original music file, thereby deteriorating the sound quality of the <u>identified</u> <u>digital</u> original music file; and

distributing the advertising digital music file through <u>the</u> a computer communication network.

13.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim <u>12</u> 13, wherein inserting a noise component comprises inserting a voice of a performer into the <u>identified digital</u> original music file.

14.   (New) The method of claim 11, further comprising determining which digital music file has a higher probability of being reproduced by another user than other music files related to the digital music file illegally distributed through the computer communication network.

15.   (New) The method of claim 12, further comprising determining which digital music file has a higher probability of being reproduced by another user than other music files related to the digital music file illegally distributed through the computer communication network.